

Lake County Sheriff's Office

John D. Idleburg, Sheriff

MEDIA RELEASE



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MEDIA RELEASE

Multi-Agency COaST Program Records Incredibly Successful First Year

Sheriff John D. Idleburg and our six partner agencies are proud to share the success of the multi-agency Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COaST) collaborative initiative in responding to mental health related calls for service.

The team became operational in January of 2022 and consists of members from Gurnee Police Department, Lake Forest Police Department, Libertyville Police Department, Lincolnshire Police Department, Mundelein Police Department, Vernon Hills Police Department, and the Lake County Sheriff's Office. A police officer from one of these local agencies and a sheriff's deputy from the sheriff's office partner with a social worker, clinician, or peer specialist to respond to mental health related calls.

Since the inception of the multi-agency team, COaST responded to dozens of mental health calls in progress. This allowed trained professionals to deploy at the scene, spend as much time as necessary with the person in crisis, and allow the first-responding deputies/police officers to return to emergency calls for service.

One of the many examples of COaST's success occurred this year when COaST responded to a call-in-progress of a teen with autism was behaving aggressively. The COaST clinician and accompanying officer were able to spend a substantial amount of time with the teen and the teen's mother. This allowed the local police agency to return to routine calls for service. COaST was able to calm the teen, provide therapeutic techniques to help the mother, and offer services to the mother for her own mental care.

When not responding to mental health calls in progress, COaST conducts resource visits with individuals who had prior interaction with law-enforcement. Police officers/sheriff's deputies who interact with someone they feel could use follow-up services submit a request to COaST. Since January of 2022, 1,559 requests were made to COaST from all of the partner agencies. Of those 1,559 requests, COaST successfully contacted 1,164 of those individuals. COaST was able to offer a wide variety of assistance to all of those they made contact with.

One of the many examples of a successful follow-up occurred when COaST followed-up with a mother, whose juvenile son was recently hospitalized for a suicide threat. The COaST officer and clinician were able to provide a number of resources to the mother, along with structured steps to take with her son, upon his discharge from the hospital. The mother was grateful and continued following-up with COaST to inform the team of her son's improvements.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "As we planned and established this multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team, we felt it would be a huge benefit to Lake County. After one year, we can now see what we envisioned became a true. Lives have undoubtedly been saved and changed for the better due to the hard-working, dedicated members of this team. I am extraordinarily proud of our multi-agency collaboration and everyone who serves in the COaST program."

Lincolnshire Chief of Police Joe Leonas said, "COaST has proven to be an invaluable resource. We have been able to take a holistic approach to aiding those in mental distress by providing options and services, as opposed to taking enforcement action. The positive feedback and success stories we continually receive from families have shown the true value of our partnership, and the Village of Lincolnshire is proud to be a founding member."

Gurnee Chief of Police Brian Smith said, "We are proud to have been able to provide two Gurnee Police Officers to partner with the other agencies in this pilot program. The collaborative alliance between police and mental health workers, allows for protection and support for individuals and families in crisis. The positive impact this program has had in our community, and on our officers, has exceeded our expectations. The Gurnee Police Department remains dedicated to continuing our contribution to COaST by offering assistance and improving access to care for those experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis."

Mundelein Chief of Police John Monahan said, "The COaST program has been an invaluable resource for our residents and a terrific tool for officers. Our agency has experienced several successful interventions because COaST offers prompt responses and comprehensive service options for those in crisis. Another benefit to the department is the knowledge, skills, experience, and additional resources that participating officers have brought back and passed on to their colleagues."

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